outlined for amending the minimum buffer stock provision to a maximum buffer stock;

(c) what is FCI's own storage capacity at present;

(d) whether this new proposal would help the private sector in exports;

(e) whether Government would also make provision to free them from the State taxes; and

(f) if so, to what extent Government have agreed to involve private sector in exports as well as setting up of godowns in the country?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHANTA KUMAR): (a), (b) and (d) The procurement of foodgrains at present is open ended. In the context of burgeoning stocks of foodgrains and mounting food subsidy, a suggestion has been made that there should be a ceiling on procurement. A suggestion has also been made that the existing buffer stock norms be reviewed and scaled down. The matter is being examined.

(c) As on 1.3.2002, the total storage capacity available with the Food Corporation of India (FCI) was 356.49 lakh tonnes out of which 150.16 lakh tonnes was its own.

(e) No such proposal is under consideration of the Government at present. However, WTO compatible subsidies are being provided for the export of foodgrains from the Central Pool.

(f) Private parties are free to take wheat and rice from the Central Pool for the purpose of export. The National Policy on Handling, Storage and Transportation of Foodgrains envisages, *inter alia*, harnessing the efforts and resources of public and private sector, both domestic and foreign.

Connectivity of Garuda Mobile Service

*538. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether connectivity of Garuda Mobile Service is growing;

(b) if so, the deatails thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether MTNL has recently imported a huge number of mobile instruments for this service; and

(d) if so, the number of pieces imported, the country from which imported and the price thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The details of connection under Limited Mobility Telephone Services now known as Garuda are:—

DELHI

YEAR	CAPACITY	TELEPHONE CONNECTION
Launch May, 1997	600	480
Expansion October, 1998	6000	5600 approx.
Expansion September, 2001	30000	23002

MUMBAI

YEAR	CAPACITY	TELEPHONE CONNECTION
Launch December, 2001	30000	8854

(c) and (d) MTNL has recently purchased handsets (mobile instruments) as below:—

No. of Pieces	Supplier	Total Price
15,000	L.G. Electronic System India Ltd.	Rs. 12,56,40,232/-